

The term "Ordinary Time" may be misleading. In the context of the liturgical year the term "ordinary" does not mean "usual or average." Ordinary here means "not seasonal." Ordinary Time is that part of the Liturgical Year that lies outside the seasons of Lent-Easter and Advent-Christmas. In Ordinary Time, the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ not in one specific aspect but in all its aspects. The readings during the liturgies of Ordinary Time help to instruct us on how to live out our Christian faith in our daily lives.

For Ordinary Time, readings for the Liturgy of the Word have been chosen for thirty-four Sundays and the weeks following them. However, some years have only thirty-three weeks of Ordinary Time. Further, since the Christmas Season ends on a Sunday with the Baptism of the Lord, and the Easter Season ends with Pentecost Sunday, two weeks in Ordinary Time do not have a corresponding Sunday. In addition, some Sundays of Ordinary Time are superseded by a solemnity that coincides with a Sunday, e.g., The Most Holy Trinity or Christ the King, the last Sunday of the liturgical year.

Ordinary Time in the Church's year occurs in two sections. The first part begins on the Monday following the Christmas season, which ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on the Sunday following January 6. It lasts through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season.

Ordinary Time resumes after the Easter Season, on the Monday after Pentecost, and continues until evening prayer on the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

The Sunday that follows the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. The remaining Sundays are numbered consecutively up to the Sunday preceding the beginning of Lent.

When the readings for Ordinary Time resume after Pentecost Sunday, the selection depends on the length of the season that year. When there are thirty-four Sundays in Ordinary Time, the week to be used is the one that immediately follows the last week used before Lent. When Ordinary Time has thirty-three Sundays, the week that would consecutively follow after

Pentecost is omitted. This is to assure that the texts assigned to the last two weeks of Ordinary Time about the coming of God's Kingdom are proclaimed.

Themes in Prayer and Scripture

During the Liturgical Year, the scripture readings for seasons of Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas have prominent themes. During Ordinary Time the readings are not chosen according to a theme. Rather, they present in a continuous fashion, the life and work of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Gospels of either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. John's Gospel is read principally during the liturgical seasons.

The Gospel Readings

During the Christmas season, the gospels recount the birth and early life of Jesus. On the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, the gospel begins to speak about the ministry of Jesus through the text about the wedding feast at Cana and two other passages from the Gospel of John. Then, with the Third Sunday, the life and preaching of Jesus unfold in each of the Gospels.

The Old Testament Readings

The readings from the Old Testament were chosen to correspond to the Gospel passages and to bring out the unity between the Old and the New Testaments. The selections were made so that many of the principal pages of the Old Testament would be read on Sundays. The readings are arranged in a logical order, but according to what the gospel reading requires.

The Readings from the Apostles

During Ordinary Time, the Letters of Paul and James are read in a sequential manner. (The Letters of Peter and John are read during the Easter and Christmas seasons.) Because of the length of the First letter to the Corinthians and the diverse issues it addresses, the selections from it are read at the beginning of Ordinary Time over the three years of the lectionary cycle. The Letter to the Hebrews is divided into two parts. The first part is read in year B and the second in Year C.

The feast of Christ the King is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time and of the liturgical year.

The Liturgical Color

The liturgical color for Ordinary Time is green, a sign of hope.

A Symbol for Ordinary Time

The Chi Rho is a Christian symbol that dates from the early Church. It is comprised of the first two letters of the Greek word for Messiah, *Christos*—the letter Chi looks like the letter "X", and the letter Rho looks like the letter "P." This abbreviation became a symbol representing Jesus Christ.

